

“The police department should adopt an approach that combines suppression of youth gang criminal acts through aggressive enforcement of laws, with community mobilization involving a broad cross-section of the community in combating the problem.”

Even improvements to the community in general are theorized to have reductions on delinquent acts. This includes theories relative to crime prevention through environmental design in which Wheeler and Cottrell (1966) note, “we may be able to prevent some delinquency, not by acting directly upon the delinquent with casework or other services, but by acting on his social and physical environment.” However, this does not mean improvements in the community can be made at the whims of city officials. Ideally it would involve interacting with youth and other residents directly in order to determine their needs and make the most helpful changes. Fleisher (1998) determined that “communities must achieve a balance between law enforcement and service delivery, preferably before arrests occur.”

“We cannot arrest our way out of the gang problem in North Carolina!” Lt. Mark Bridgeman, President, NC Gang Investigators Association.

The Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project targeted youth and young adults to reduce gang violence in certain areas of Chicago (See Appendix 1,A). Weed & Seed is a nationally implemented program that seeks to reduce crime and increase community activity in order to sustain the reduced crime rate (See Appendix 1,B). Both of these programs rely on collaboration between law enforcement and community leaders.

Community policing concepts are seen as invaluable in impacting a reduction in the gang problem in North Carolina.

Identified Effective Practices

Collaborative approaches to the gang problem are generally agreed to be the best strategy. However, given the demands that such collaboration puts on a wide variety of groups, proper implementation can be difficult.

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